

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 14, 2003

LB 407

Jensen on the Smith amendment.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I stand in opposition to this request of Senator Smith. I certainly recognize what he's trying to do to get more funding for the federal qualified health center in that area. I do want to give you just a few things to think about, however, and that's that...he says he's not trying to take any more money away from District 2 in the Omaha area. That's true. However, District 2, the Omaha area, has more minorities than either the 1st or the 3rd District put together. There's 101 minorities...101,000 minorities in the 2nd Congressional District. There are 89,000 minorities in Districts 1 and 3. District 2 gets \$1 million in funding. District 1 and 3 get \$1,580,000. And if you want to do it on per capita basis, actually that turns out to be about \$9.90 per minority person in District 2, and better than \$16 per minority person in District 1 and 3. We have now also two new federal qualified health centers coming on in Nebraska. Columbus just got theirs. Lincoln is a couple months away from getting one. This is an initiative that is really supported by the Bush administration. They want to develop more of those. Also, as we've cut back on Medicaid, the federal qualified health centers become kind of the safety net for those individuals who need assistance. But it all...and then we have...yes, we do have some community action agencies. We've got...which are funded, really, with community service block grants. What we really need to do is, this very next year, do a complete study on how that we fund community health centers out of the LB 692 dollars. We have set a limit of \$50 million per year. And we've been able to fund that with our fiscal...or, with our investment funding. But I think we need to look at all of the community health centers, the federally qualified health centers, before we go out and expand the program further. And we do need to look at Columbus and Lincoln as to how those are to be done. And at this particular time, I would recommend that we not fund another agency until we've had a study to do all of the agencies and to how that we want to fund those in the future. So at this time, I would not support the Smith amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.